

Springs from the Heart



Upul Nishantha Gamage



The head is open to a world full of arguments, but the heart is close. The head goes after ideas and knowledge, but the heart is quiet. The head goes with pretension, but the heart goes with honesty. The head cannot change a person, but the heart can.

The heart changes upon meeting a living exemplar who experiences the Dhamma. The heart, not the head, sees the peaceful way of living of the exemplar. The heart, not the head, is curious to experience the wonder of such a way of living. So the heart opens and starts looking for truth through the experiences of the exemplar. As a result, confidence (saddhā) springs from the heart. Having sprung, the confidence ensures your inner beauty and morality and makes you see the world with the eyes of Dhamma, while making you spiritually healthier day by day.



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14

Dhamma Dāna

May this be a tribute to those who are
yet to be blossomed!

Upali Illangasekera
Chintha Illangasekera

Springs from the Heart

Talk given by

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1. The path and the walk

Dear Dhamma Friends today is traditionally the last full-moon day of this year. This year is going to end in a couple of days. Though time has no end, time measuring devices have a beginning and an end. Though the space is infinite, a yardstick has a beginning and an end. Even though time is infinite, one round of a clock has a starting point and an ending point. Calendars and diaries also have starting and ending points.

Dear Dhamma Friends; on this last full-moon day of the year, it is worth thinking about the path of Dhamma and your walk with Dhamma. **The path of Dhamma is different from the walk with Dhamma because the former does not depend on us. The path of Dhamma exists regardless of our presence.** The path of Dhamma is different from walking along the path of Dhamma. Now that this year has nearly come to an end, it may be a good idea to talk about the efforts we have taken, exercises we have done and sacrifices we have made all this time to walk along the path of Dhamma. It does not mean that you started your journey along the path of Dhamma this year. It is difficult to tell exactly when you inclined towards the Dhamma. Though we know the date of birth, it is not possible to tell when we inclined towards the Dhamma.

However, on a particular day in the past, all of us probably had some interest and joy in the path of Dhamma. Because of that joy, we probably made some efforts. Before that time, though the path of Dhamma was there, we probably did not feel any joy in the Dhamma. However, we may have felt the value of Dhamma in our hearts, even though the reason was not obvious. Furthermore, we felt confident about the Dhamma. The way we felt about the Dhamma is personal. However, it is worthwhile recollecting from time to time, how we entered the path of Dhamma and what the reasons were. We need to be grateful about that. Gratefulness is a rare quality. We have to try acquiring such gratefulness. We need to cultivate gratefulness, while at the same time recollecting its value again and again. A book or a person or some other reason probably got us into the path of Dhamma.

2. A wheel of a machine

Dear Dhamma Friends, on a particular day in the past, we started stepping along the path of Dhamma. That may have happened knowingly or unknowingly. However, it happened. Since then, we have been trying to walk along the path of

Dhamma. We may have progressed. **When we look back at the path we had walked, there were times when we forgot about the existence of the path of Dhamma.** All of us may have had such dark time periods, particularly when we burden ourselves with other responsibilities. We had times when we gave priority to other problems like the clouds covering the sun and the moon rays. The clouds cannot get the sun and the moon to disappear but only to cover them. As a result, the sun and the moon become invisible. May be you can remember such times. **You were probably the wheel of a social machine spun at a speed and a direction determined by society. You may remember the days and months that just passed by as you kept on spinning around.** On the other hand, we may have had times when we ran along the path of Dhamma with a desire to speed up the process, thinking about importance of not delaying. We may have had times when we ran fast restlessly.

3. Understanding and freedom

All of us have reached a place where we are now, on the path of Dhamma. We did not reach that place effortlessly or by way of a gift offered to us. Nobody can give us understanding and freedom, in the form of gifts. **Freedom is a result of**

understanding. It means that freedom cannot be gifted and understanding cannot be awarded. Therefore, understanding and freedom totally depend on our own practice and effort.

Dear Dhamma Friends, if we have acquired some understanding and have experienced some freedom because of that understanding, both of these entirely depended on the path we have taken.

4. Curiosity

We are often curious about the results of the path. Where am I on this path? Is it really possible to experience the destinations described in Dhamma books? Is it possible for us to reach the destinations reached by others, in the past? Arising of such doubts in the mind is normal. There is nothing unusual about such doubts. However, **a person needs to be curious about such doubts.** No matter how the Dhamma praises about the results, it is natural for a person to be doubtful about such results. A person probably feels that s/he is lagging far behind.

5. Doubts and queries

Dear Dhamma Friends, it is worth enquiring about the path and its results. What are we looking for? Where are we supposed to go? What is the path needed to reach that place? How are we going to reach that destination? What is the vehicle? What is the technology and the mechanism that can be used? Let's start with a story known to us.

These doubts arose in you and me as well as in those who read about Buddhism in books and in those who closely associated with the Lord Buddha, when He was alive. Therefore, it is not unusual for us to have such doubts. We are about 2600 years distant from the Lord Buddha. On the other hand, we cannot see the living Lord Buddha. When the Lord Buddha was still alive and there were no such time gaps, those who closely associated with Him had similar doubts and queries, even after listening to His discourses. There are many such stories presented in the Sutta Pitaka.

6. Advice for hectic people

In a story “A devotee named Dhammadinna frequently visited the Jetavana Monastery. He listened to the Dhamma delivered by the Lord Buddha and discussed with Him. When the Lord Buddha was not present, he associated with other monks and listened to the Dhamma. Dhammadinna came with about 500 close friends to meet the Lord Buddha and made a request worshipfully: “Lord Buddha, please preach us a certain discourse, for our own sake, that is useful for us.” At that point, the Lord Buddha delivered a short but an impressive message and advised them. The Lord Buddha said: “I have preached many profound Suttas. These Suttas have profound meanings. These Suttas were inclined to supermundanity and focused on emptiness and non-self, nothing else. Associate with such Suttas from time to time and live according to them.” That was the short advice.

However, those innocent people were laden with an aggravating weight as reflected by the statements made afterwards by Dhammadinna. He said: “Please Lord Buddha, we are innocent people. We have much work. We have children. We have much household work. We have furniture. We engage always in money transactions. As our lives are so occupied, it is

impossible to live life in the manner You preach/suggest. We cannot live according to the profound discourses preached by You. It is impossible to have a life like ours, while associating from time to time with those discourses. Please preach us something that is possible for us to do.” At that point, the Lord Buddha did not refer back to the Suttas mentioned earlier. He did not ask them to give up the Suttas if it was difficult to live according to them. He did not say that it was His Dhamma.

Then the Lord Buddha preached as follows: “In such a situation, Dhammadinna, get to know the Lord Buddha. To the best of your ability, recognize the spiritual qualities of the Lord Buddha. Afterwards, acquire unshaken trust in the Lord Buddha. Such unshaken trust is firm. It is impossible to break such unshaken trust through arguments. Acquire such unshaken trust in the Lord Buddha in your mind. Acquire unshaken trust in the Dhamma and in the qualities of Dhamma. Acquire unshaken trust in the Sangha who had lived and is living according to the Dhamma.

Afterwards, the Lord Buddha preached about the five precepts known to all of us. “Abstain from taking life, abstain from taking what is not given, abstain from sexual misconduct, abstain from false speech intending to deceive another, and

abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages that cause heedlessness in people who are not mindful.” Then the Lord Buddha summarized/repeated his advice to Dhammadinna: **know the spiritual qualities of Lord Buddha and acquire unshaken trust in Him. Further, know the qualities of Dhamma and acquire unshaken trust in the Dhamma. Similarly, know the qualities of Sangha and acquire unshaken trust in the Sangha. These points along with the five precepts are simpler than those presented earlier.**

Having listened to the Lord Buddha, Dhammadinna said: “My people and I live in the way preached by you. We live according to Your guidance and advice. We are not doubtful about You. We are not doubtful about the Dhamma. We are not doubtful about the Noble Sangha. We do not harm any life knowingly.....etc.” Then the Lord Buddha said: “If this is so Dhammadinna, all of you have attained stream entry. Very Good Dhammadinna.” The Lord Buddha was delighted and appreciated them. Then He said: “You all have the elements of stream-entry. All 500 of you are the same.” That is one of many such stories.

When we think of the path of Dhamma, it is possible for us to draw a picture, depicting what we need to do for walking along that path.

7. A messy head

There are other similar stories. In another story, a person named Mahanama belonging to the Shakyian clan comes often to meet the Lord Buddha. One day he worshipfully tells the Lord Buddha “I frequently come to listen to Dhamma discourses. In Your absence, I listen to discourses of other monks. When I am inside this temple, my mind is beautiful. It is pure. I am fully mindful of the Triple Gem. However, **when I leave the temple for home, everything is a mess.** There is no discipline on the road. Elephants walk along the road. So do horses. Bulls and bullock carts are moving on the road. It is possible to collide with any or all of those things. Even the people walking on the road are not disciplined. It is possible to even clash with them. **When I step onto a road, my mindfulness totally disappears. I do not remember You, the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. A person with a messy head is on the road.**” Mahanama added more. “My problem is this. If I happen to die at such a place, what is going to happen to me? **If I have to die**

while having a messy mind, what is going to happen to me?” Sometimes, this question may have often bothered him. The Lord Buddha gave an answer. However, Mahanama repeatedly asked the same question.

Then, the Lord Buddha gave the same answer using a different simile. The Lord Buddha did not ask Mahanama not to leave the temple even though his mind gets dirty as soon as he steps onto the road to go home. That is not the solution. The path of Dhamma does not go across the Jetavana Monastery. **The path of Dhamma is in us. It is not something that disappears after stepping onto the road and reappears when in the temple.**

8. Fate of butter

The Lord Buddha gave another simile: When a person puts a pot filled with butter into a well and breaks the pot when it is in the well, what is going to happen to the broken pieces of the pot and to the butter? Mahanama replied as follows: “There are two possibilities. **The broken pieces of the pot sink to the bottom of the well. The butter floats on the water.**” Then the Lord Buddha said: “That is correct, Mahanama. Similarly, wherever you die, worms eat your body that is composed of the four great

elements (earth, water, fire and air) and made with the involvement of your parents and nourished by food. If the worms do not eat it, vultures, foxes and dogs will. That is something unavoidable. That is the fate of the body. However, **the mind is similar to the butter. It comes to the surface if you have unshaken trust in the Triple Gem.** At that point, the Lord Buddha started to discuss the five precepts.

9. Preparing your hands

Then He talked about generosity. **We need to practise and cultivate generosity.** Everybody is generous. The Lord Buddha uses a special term here i.e. making the generosity free without hiding it. **Do not make excuses to avoid being generous.** Let the generosity be free. Get ready to share. **Frequently cultivate a mind willing to share.** The Lord Buddha makes it more beautiful by saying **“Prepare your hands to give something belonging to you at any time.”** Become a person who another can easily ask something from. **You have got to be generous enough for another to come to you for help.** Do not let another think twice or thrice about seeking your help. Do not let another person to think “Should I ask or should I not ask? How is this person going to react? Is s/he going to dismiss me, saying,

“If you had come yesterday I could have given you?” It is not possible to give everything one asks you. However, **generosity is an attribute of the mind. Generosity has nothing to do with money or wealth or banks. It is a spiritual attribute. Do not hide that attribute. You may be lacking in money. However, do not blunt the generosity.**

We can ponder as to why the Lord Buddha preached about discourses associated with cultivating and practising generosity. No matter how stingy we are, how we cling on and hide what we own, we lose everything when we die. Death dispossesses all the worldly things possessed by life. Clinging on to our possessions makes us die sorrowfully and also makes it impossible for us to breathe the last breath peacefully. Death is not a problem for a mind that has practised to let go, share, and be generous.

Regardless of how and where you die, if you are possessive of such qualities, your mind comes to the top like butter. No matter what, the butter will not sink and the broken pieces of the pot will not float. The butter cannot sink with the broken pieces of the pot. Likewise, the delightful and pleasing mind always takes you to the top.

10. The leaning tree

On another occasion, Mahanama asked the same question. Then, the Lord Buddha gave the same answer but with a different simile. If a huge tree is leaning towards the East, which direction is it going to fall if a wind uproots it? Mahanama says, “Lord Buddha, it falls towards the East.” Then the Lord Buddha said: **“Likewise, a mind inclined towards the Dhamma, no matter how it falls, is going to fall towards the Dhamma. There is no other place where it is going to fall. Death cannot make you fall somewhere else. You will fall towards the Dhamma. You will incline towards the Dhamma.”**

11. Be generous out of the circle!

Dear Dhamma friends, you need to do something very simple. You need to acquire unshaken trust in the Triple Gem. Be careful about keeping the five precepts. **You need to be careful about both taking and keeping the five precepts.** The next point added by the Lord Buddha is about generosity. **Do not lose your generosity. Instead, you need to cultivate it.** At any moment, when you receive something, simply have a thought, “who I am going to share this with.” Purposefully, you have to

come up with such a thought. Whatever you receive or own, without being self-centred, think **“who am I going to share this with?”** as if a mother thinks of her children no sooner she receives some delicious food. Often, every mother brings home a piece of wedding cake received at a wedding to share with her children, even if the father does not do such a thing. **This generosity should not be limited to a certain group of people. Try to always think of somebody unknown to you.** We share things with those who are within a particular frame. Try to share things with a new friend. Give something to a new person. **Generosity should go beyond ideas of ‘me’ and ‘my people.’**

In that simile, the Lord Buddha preached: “Rain falling on a hill first makes small waterways. Later, those water ways turn into ditches. Ditches turn into waterfalls making small brooks. Brooks make small rivers. Small rivers make big rivers. Big rivers fill oceans.” Presenting this beautiful simile, the Lord Buddha said: “Similarly, a person having confidence (*saddhā*) in the Triple Gem ends his/her saṃsāric journey after obtaining realization, without stopping halfway, just as the water that falls on a hill ends up in the ocean.”

12. Faith vs confidence

Dear Dhamma friends, the Dhamma gives an enormous value to confidence. Confidence is the base. **A person who acquired confidence starts to follow the path, no matter what. If a person acquires confidence, s/he becomes interested in what made him/her acquired it.** Confidence is the base. We think that we were born with confidence. We often think that a Sri Lankan is born with confidence. This is just like a popular advertisement. There is no considerable meaning of that popular advertisement. There is no truth in that way of thinking, though we tend to think in that way. **Confidence cannot be acquired by birth. A person is born with faith, not with confidence.** When a family has some faith in something, a child born to that family is going to have faith in the same thing. A person acquires faith by birth. Faith is not always religious, though it can be connected with religions.

If the parents belong to a particular religion, the children born to that family spontaneously become faithful to that religion. Their faith in that religion changes after the children become grownups. However, we are born with faith. Moreover, if a family has faith in a particular art, the children of that family will also have faith in the same thing. That particular art could

be singing or music or dancing or painting. If parents have faith in some art, their children are born with that faith. If parents have faith in a particular political party, their children also have faith in the same for some time. If a mother or father believes in science, their children also believe in science. This faith does not have characteristics of a religion. **Faith is a common characteristic of all human beings as all of us are born with some faith.**

Faith is a common feeling. It is something like hypnotism. If a large group of people believe in something, others are spontaneously attracted to join that large number of people. Faith is a common form of hypnotism. **Faith is something given by society.** When a person sees some symbol or other, s/he becomes faithful to that. Suppose it is a political faith. When a person sees the flag or the colour or the symbol of that political party, s/he gets some faith. It is the same when a person sees a symbol associated with a religion. It is the same when a person sees a religious building. When a person hears a word associated with a religion, s/he becomes faithful. This is the nature of faith. A person does meritorious work because of his/her faith. A person also commits sin because of faith. **Faith creates a meritorious person or a sinner.**

Faith makes enemies, but confidence makes you a friend of all. A person kills others for the sake of his/her own faith. Faith in his/her cult or philosophy or belief or religion or politics or science can make a person a killer. A person devoted to a religion can kill others for the sake of his/her own religion. A person devoted to politics can kill others for the sake of his/her own politics. A person devoted to science can kill many for the sake of science. However, all of them are regarded as “good devotees” based on their own beliefs. Furthermore, in such a situation, the term “devotee” is used instead of “murderer.” This is the truth. **However, confidence never makes a person a murderer.** A person who has acquired confidence never harms any life. This is a basic characteristic of a person who has acquired confidence.

Faith is different from confidence. We all have faith. Not just you or me. Everybody has faith, whether they believe in a religion or not. Everybody has faith in something/somebody, art, science, philosophy, politics, cinema, actors/actresses, singers, scientists, philosophers, politicians, or whatever. Human beings always have faith in something/somebody. Faith cannot relieve us from suffering. We inherit faith from others, but confidence

has to be generated within us. We cannot be born with confidence, only with faith. Confidence is a quality that we must generate within us.

Therefore, the Lord Buddha preached to the Brahman Kasi Bharadvaja about His spiritual farming. When Brahman Kasi Bharadvaja challenged the Lord Buddha by saying: “Lord Buddha, though you talk about farming, I cannot see any agricultural equipment. What is the farming You do?” Then the Lord Buddha replied: **“I am engaged in spiritual farming. I sow confidence as the seed. If a person plants the seed of confidence in themselves, it starts germinating within.”**

To repeat: Confidence is a quality to be generated within. Confidence and faith are as different as the sky and the earth. A person is not born with confidence unless s/he had been born in the human world in a previous birth as a stream-enterer (*Sotāpanna*) or a once-returner (*Sakadagami*). An ordinary person is born with faith. Confidence is a quality that a person must generate. In a world of worldlings, uncountable numbers of people are born, live and die with faith. Under such circumstances, how valuable it is to be born and to live as a person who has acquired confidence. How priceless it is to generate confidence within.

The Lord Buddha did not try to change faith as it is pointless to do that. In some discourses, the Lord Buddha clearly says, “I preach not to change the faith you have in a particular teacher. You can continue to have faith in your teacher. Do not lose your faith in your teacher because of Me. If you used to give alms in faith to a particular hermit, continue to do so. Do not stop that because of Me. I preach to generate confidence. If you have any suffering, faith cannot relieve you of that. **I preach to relieve you of that suffering, not to ruin your faith.** Let there be faith.”

To repeat: Confidence is different from faith. Confidence is a quality. **Confidence is the beginning of wisdom. No wisdom exists in faith.** Hypnotism exists in faith. Faith is something we inherently acquire. **Therefore, faith is always blind. Faith does not enquire. A person in faith simply surrenders.** Faith asks you to surrender, and you follow with your eyes closed. **Confidence opens your eyes. With confidence you take full responsibility-take matters into your own hand. Faith takes your responsibility from you and hands it over to an unknown and unseen force. Therefore, those who are in faith keep on begging.** You have to beg, because faith has taken your responsibility for your own comfort and suffering from you and

handed it over to somebody else. Afterwards, if you need some comfort, you have to beg for it. When you are afflicted with suffering, again you need to beg for relief. **Faith makes you a poor person. Faith has never made anybody rich. Faith always makes you spiritually poor, but confidence makes you rich.**

13. The wealth of the truly wealthy

Therefore, the first wealth owned by a wealthy person is confidence. There are seven kinds of noble wealth: confidence, moral conduct, shame and fear of doing something wrong/blameworthy, developing one's character, sacrificing one's possessions for the benefit of others, and insight into three characteristics of existence (impermanence, suffering and non-self). **This Noble wealth cannot be taken away or stolen or confiscated. The first wealth of a Noble Wealthy person is confidence.** Faith creates the poor and confidence creates the wealthy. **Confidence makes you wealthy.**

The Lord Buddha preached thus to Mahanama and Dhammadinna: “Both of you are free from the four realms of hell. Do not be scared thinking where you will die, or how you

will die. Do not feel bad about for not having time to associate with suttas with profound meanings and also those inclined towards super-mundanity and emptiness. **If you have confidence in Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha you are free from the four realms of hell. You are a wealthy person.** You do not have to be scared of death.” **Confidence creates a brave person. Faith creates a coward.** Faith always needs a group of people. Faith is always in search of groups of people. Faith needs a large group of people. Confidence is a personal feeling. Confidence is something you experience for yourself.

14. The secret behind confidence

Dear Dhamma Friends, it is worth thinking about how confidence is created. We have already talked about how faith is created. It is created by birth and by the majority following something or somebody else. Faith is a feeling, similar to the reaction of a group of termites and bees in response to a chemical. Not a single termite or bee questions about their actions, but instead all of them act together in response to a common order. This is good in situations where a group of people needs to be controlled. In that sense, faith is better than any law and punishment. Faith can get us to do anything. When

hypnotism, known as faith, influences a person, ideas such as ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘justice’ or ‘injustice,’ ‘equity’ or ‘inequity’ and ‘righteousness’ or ‘unrighteousness’ are no longer valid. Those ideas are in a different dimension. A person becomes a slave of faith. A person becomes a servant of faith. Unlike faith, confidence rarely develops in 100 or even 1000 people. Confidence does not set in after seeing a building or a symbol.

Confidence needs a living exemplar. Confidence needs a non-suffering living exemplar. A person who suffers more than you is not a good exemplar. If having faced the same problem, I suffer but another person does not suffer, then I am delighted to see the person who does not suffer. “How does that person live like this?” **“How does that person tolerate it when someone scolds him? Why does he not get angry like me? My blood boils when someone scolds me. However, this person does not get angry. How is that possible?” That is the beginning of confidence.** However, confidence does not necessarily set in just because you have met a living exemplar. We have to have some merits too. Though many people got the opportunity to meet the Lord Buddha, the highest supreme living exemplar, not all of them acquired confidence. We must also have the need. **If we have the need, living exemplars are**

very valuable. Confidence does not arise from a book or buildings or the power of charms, but moves from **heart to heart.** After 2600 years, this is how the path of Dhamma has reached our hands from the Lord Buddha. The path goes from one person to another, from one exemplar to another. Words are secondary.

15. Serene truth

A wandering ascetic known as Upatissa, who sought after the truth, undertook diverse philosophical practices under the guidance of many teachers. He wanted to know if any of these teachers had found the truth. Having been exposed to many different philosophical arguments and types of advice, Upatissa understood that none of his teachers had truth in them. Upon returning home, Upatissa saw the Arahant Assaji, a young and new monk among the first 60 disciples. Upatissa noticed Arahant Assaji's walk and look. He also noticed how Arahant Assaji sat down and ate alms food. Having noticed all these things, Upatissa thought that there must be some truth there, because **truth is always serene. The language of truth is serene.** Truth is not found in the tone of voice as harsh things can be said using serene tones. The **Arahant Assaji had not**

spoken, but the truth spoke. Upatissa questioned Arahant Assaji: **“What is the truth in you? What is the truth experienced by you? Who taught you this truth?”** Arahant Assaji humbly replied: “I am a novice. I do not know profound things.” Then Upatissa said: “I do not need to hear anything profound. Please tell me in short. **I know now that the truth is simple.** I have been arguing all this time looking for profound things. Arguments always start in the head.”

16. Head vs heart

Dear Dhamma Friends, arguments and debates take place from head to head. Two heads argue. Two heads fight. Two heads debate. A person may be able to win a debate, but he is lost spiritually. A debate always makes you a loser spiritually because real advice cannot be taken or given over arguments. **No sooner an argument starts, the heart closes.** The heart becomes fully covered. **The head accepts the arguments.** Even if you use all the techniques and logic known to you, intending to teach another the truth, everything you say goes only to that person’s head, not to the heart. A person is not the head. **Changing a person is not about putting some ideas into someone’s head or removing an idea from someone’s head.**

The heart needs to change. Unless that happens, no matter what we believe in our head, it is the same old person still living because the heart has not changed. However, a book not read by you yesterday is read by you now. That book is also in your head now. You'll read another book tomorrow. In this manner, **a large library exists in our heads. Hundreds and thousands of discourses are in our heads.** However, when it comes to living, a person full of books and discourses in his/her head does the same thing as someone who does not know anything. Why is that? That is because the human being is not the head. **An argument cannot change the inner nature of a person, but it proves something.** When something is proven, it has to be accepted. However, a person accepts it only with the head. The heart is not ready to accept it. **Wherever arguments take place, the heart is absent.** The heart turns you down. **The heart does not agree to arguments. The heart needs to open. The heart needs an experience. The heart opens only to a living exemplar. A heart only becomes delighted upon meeting a living exemplar. In contrast, logical ideas make the head or brain delighted.** But delight in our head cannot take us very far. Therefore, only true advice, not an argument, changes a person.

Mahanama and Dhammadinna asked the Lord Buddha to advise them as arguments cannot transform a person. There are **no arguments in advice but only exemplars**. The Arahant Assaji did not walk slowly to set an example. **Spiritual friends are always exemplars**. If they happen to run, even their running is genuine. There is some beauty in their running. It is more beautiful to run genuinely than to pretend by walking slowly, because of the input of the heart. **Honesty comes from the heart. Pretension is driven only by the head.**

17. Losing the battle in the heart

The second example is the Emperor Dharmasoka. He is the greatest transformation in the human history. Transforming a politician is the greatest among all. He killed an uncountable number of people for no obvious reason. He went to villages and just killed people for the sake of it. Such a mind is very cruel. Therefore, the villagers called him Chandasoka behind his back (Chanda means thug). Chandasoka saw the way the monk Nigroda walked. The walk of that monk was the exemplar. Chandasoka thought: “Why cannot I walk like him? Why am I so restless? Why am I so violent? Why am I so cruel?” Everybody who was cruel may have seen the walk of the monk

Nigroda, though they did not get the message. A person has to have an enquiring mind to receive that message. The wanderer Upatissa and Chandasoka were enquiring. Both had lost the battle within. Upatissa won all the argument he had with his last teacher, Sanjaya. However, he lost in his heart. **Chandasoka won all the battles but lost in his heart.** Both of them had lost in their hearts. As both needed a path for opening, they were enquiring. At that very moment, the Arahant Assaji came in front of Upatissa, and the novice monk Nigroda came in front of Chandasoka.

18. Living wonders

Dear Dhamma Friends, we can see that **confidence sets in only upon meeting a spiritual friend.** Who actually is a spiritual friend? We need a living person to develop confidence. **According to the Dhamma, a spiritual friend is not greedy, has no hatred and is not confused. Such a person does not run after desires, lives amicably in a world full of conflicts. Such a person lives without disputes in a world full of confusions.** Whenever we are confused and feel in our heart that another person lives without having disputes, we tend to develop spiritual delight in that person at that point. **The head cannot**

feel such things but the heart can. Nobody tells us that s/he is at peace, does not get angry, does not have desires etc. **The Dhamma talks silently. The silent language of Dhamma is felt only by the heart that has a need. At that point, delight sets in. There is no surrendering, but an enormous delight.** A person realizes that s/he is running after a desire though s/he possesses many things. Then s/he thinks, “This person who has not got as much as I have lives without running after any desire. How does s/he live peacefully?” That delight and curiosity arise in us. **“How does s/he live without making others angry in a world full of disputes? How does s/he tolerate conflicts? How does s/he share everything generously with others in a world that tries to credit everything into its own accounts?”**

A person has to see and hear these things with their own eyes and ears as well as with the heart. The heart should feel. When our head feels these things, we tend to argue and make excuses: “Even though s/he behaves like that, I cannot do the same as I have lots of problems.” In this manner, we disregard what we see and hear. Make up the mind for a moment. That is all an argument does. **Arguments demean us every day.** Arguments make us think that our lifestyle is good.

It is worth enquiring whether we are going to take refuge in arguments any longer.

Dear Dhamma Friends, leave arguments alone, and let your heart find the truth. There may be people in this society who live according to truth, live closely with the truth leading a peaceful life without getting restless. We cannot deny that. Arguments may prove that there are no such people in society. If we take refuge in arguments, we get ourselves in trouble every day. **Let the heart look for a genuine, inspiring experience. A person steps onto this path of Dhamma only if s/he gains such a rare experience.**

19. Beautifying

Confidence makes you a moral person. Confidence always sets in based on a quality, but faith does not require any such quality. Gratitude is such quality. **Go in search of grateful people. Associate with grateful people. Plant the seed of gratefulness within.** If you happen to see the plant of a beautiful flower at a friend's garden, you may ask for a cutting of that plant. However, **give much more priority to spiritual**

beauty than to anything else. Confidence makes you a beautiful person on the inside.

20. Direction of morality

The Dhamma talks about morality, giving a high priority to the five precepts. According to the Dhamma, the five precepts are simple. **Five precepts are enough to become a stream enterer.** What is morality for? **The Lord Buddha uses morality to point us in the right direction. Morality is for composure. Morality is for tranquillity of the mind.** When you sit for meditation if your mind is restless, just see for a moment why your mind is restless. Then you can see the restlessness of your mind, your behaviour and the relationship between the two. Our own mind blames us. **A mind cannot compose if conscience blames it. It is impossible to deceive a mind though it is easy to deceive others.** Someone can deceive another by acting, giving gifts, giving bribes and lying. However, **nobody can deceive conscience. Many people who win in front of other lose in front of conscience.**

The mind does not settle down particularly when you sit for meditation. **At that point, see how you have spent the day.**

“What did I do? What did I say?” At that point, you may clearly see the restlessness of your mind and the way you have spent the day, and the inter-relationship between the two. Recognize that relationship. **The restless mind is an indicator showing the temperament of our behaviour. Changing the indicator does not change your behaviour.** The speedometer indicates the speed of a vehicle. Even if we change the speedometer, the speed does not change. Even if we remove the speedometer, the speed is the same. The speedometer changes, only if we change the speed. Therefore, **morality is not for morality but for composure. Morality is for attentiveness and calmness.**

21. Faithful killer

It is important to **differentiate confidence from faith. We often confuse these two and live in faith wearing the mask of confidence. You need to come out of faith to confidence.** Let faith be there. If you have faith in certain things, let it be there. However, confidence takes a person along the path of Dhamma.

The Bhagavad-Gita is the greatest book written in the world about faith. You may have heard about this book. Krishna, a

phantom of god Vishnu, entices prince Arjuna to kill his own relatives in a great battle. Arjuna refuses in the beginning saying: “How am I going to kill them as they are my relatives?” Then Krishna realizes that it is impossible to get Arjuna into battle. Afterwards, Krishna starts to teach Arjuna thereby developing some faith in him about Krishna. In other words, Krishna hypnotized Arjuna. Without using the term hypnotism, Krishna used different techniques to create faith in Arjuna. Having done that, Arjuna was subject to one final test to find out if he had reached the point where he was ready to do what Krishna wanted. Krishna showed Arjuna a bird on a distant tree and asked: “What is that bird?” Arjuna replied: “If you say it is a crow, it is a crow. If you say it is a parrot, it is a parrot for me. If you say it is a hawk, it is a hawk for me. I do not have my own eyes. I see the world with your eyes.” This is the maximal of faith. That is why I said that **faith makes us blind. Faith is always blind. Faith does not let us see the world with our own eyes.** Whatever the faith is in-art or science or politics or religion-it makes us blind. These things may be necessary for life, but should not be confused with life. We cannot look at life with such faith. At that point, Krishna realized that Arjuna was ready and asked him to kill. Then, Arjuna killed thousands of people with no hesitation. Those who believe in that religion

think that Arjuna is a person with a great faith. Though Arjuna is a murderer, he is highly regarded as a person full of faith. Confidence is different from faith. Confidence opens your eyes.

22. The creator suffers

A beautiful story about confidence is given in the Buddhist history. The Lord Buddha goes to preach to an ordinary farmer. The Lord Buddha preached in brief, explaining the three characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self) and the nature of everything we form. **It is impossible to make something that does not change.** That is the first characteristic. We make many things. However, everything we make changes all the time. **Nobody is able to make something that lasts forever without changing. Everything, whether physical or mental, changes. Therefore, a person who makes things suffers.** That is the second characteristic. The creator suffers because of what s/he creates. It is impossible for us to change these two characteristics of nature as they are non-self. Impermanence is a principle, not something conditioned by somebody. Therefore, a principle has no owner. A principle is not conditioned by or given to the world by somebody. The principles of Mother Nature are non-self/not governed by

individuals. Having preached about those three characteristics, the Lord Buddha went back to His monastery.

23. Mara in disguise

The story continues..... “*Mara* saw what had happened and felt sad.” He thought “If I act quickly, I may be able to change that person’s mind. Otherwise, he is going to become a follower of the Lord Buddha.” The *Mara* further thought: “If I go to meet that person as *Mara*, my effort will be wasted. Therefore, I must go disguised as the Lord Buddha.” An ordinary person can easily be deceived. *Mara* went to the farmer and said: “I came here a little while ago and told you that everything that is made, changes. It is impossible to make something that does not change. Therefore, a person who makes things suffers. All these principles of impermanence and suffering belong to the world. Though I mentioned these things, I made a small mistake. This is the truth. Not everything is impermanent. Some of the things in the world are permanent. Some things are suffering, but not everything.”

Dear Dhamma Friends, just think for a moment. There are two possibilities. If a teacher told us something a moment ago, and

then the same teacher tells us quite the opposite half an hour later, we may have some conflicts with the teacher. On the other hand, we might be delighted by the teacher's humility. It is quite possible to accept the second version of the teacher, appreciating his humility. These are our two possible reactions, either finding another teacher or having accepted his second version of the truth, becoming more faithful to the same teacher. However, the farmer said: "I accepted that everything conditioned is impermanent and sorrowful, and all the phenomena in the world are non-substantial. **I accepted that not because the Lord Buddha said so but because I experienced myself. I saw it with my own wisdom that had been closed all the time. The Lord Buddha opened my wisdom. Therefore, I am able to see now. I see now that everything conditioned changes.** Therefore, the truth that I saw, and I see is the real truth. The Lord Buddha made me see the truth about the world that I could not see all this time. **The Lord Buddha is a person who talks about the truth that anybody can see.** The truth you talk about is not the truth. Therefore, you are not the Lord Buddha." The farmer did not do a DNA test to find out whether that particular person was the Lord Buddha or not. He looked at the Dhamma that he saw within. This is the difference. **Confidence opens your eyes, but faith makes you blind. When you have faith,**

you see the world with somebody else's eyes. However, confidence lets you see the world with your own eyes and the eyes of the Dhamma.

A person born blind, if covered in a dirty cloth, can be deceived by others saying “you are wearing the whitest cloth in the world.” This blind person believes that statement and proudly lives covering him/her with the dirty cloth and thinks that s/he is clean. That is faith. The Lord Buddha questioned Magandiya: “How can we help this blind person?” Do not keep him/her in blind faith anymore. Consult an expert doctor to cure that blindness. Help that blind person. Help the blind person to see with his/her own eyes the difference between black & white, good & bad and things to be done & not to be done.” That is the duty of confidence.

Confidence helps to ease suffering. The push needed for a person to take a leap forward is given by confidence.

24. The universal medicine

Dear Dhamma Friends, **you need three things to acquire confidence.** The first thing is the Lord Buddha. The second thing is the Dhamma. The third thing is the Sangha. Often the simile of a doctor is given for the Lord Buddha. Not just a doctor who prescribes medicine. The Lord Buddha also discovered medicine on his own. **The Lord Buddha first found out what the illness was, then what the reason for the illness was and then what the medicine for curing of the illness was.** Afterwards, he used the medicine and cured himself first. Then he prescribed the same medicine for others.

Many people argue about the Dhamma-Is it a philosophy? Is it a religion? **The Lord Buddha said: “It is a medicine.”** There is no other medicine better than the Dhamma. There is no other medicine similar to the Dhamma. **Having prepared the medicine and given it to us, the Lord Buddha said: “Drink it now.”** A person who has acquired confidence, drinks the **medicine of the Dhamma.** The Lord Buddha saw our spiritual illness. Before attaining Buddhahood, He Himself suffered from the same illness. However, he had no more suffering afterwards.

All the discourses, short or long, preached by the Lord Buddha are medicines. Therefore, there is no need to learn these discourses by-heart, but only to drink them. **These medicines are for curing the spiritual and mental illnesses which we are afflicted with.** In the Buddha's days, there were people who used that medicine. See what happened to them. It was immaterial whether they were educated or uneducated, rich or poor, male or female. Such things are not important. **Whoever took that medicine was completely cured of all afflictions of the saṃsāra.** When we think like this, we develop confidence in those people who took that medicine. We develop confidence in the medicine too. **We develop confidence in the Lord Buddha, who found this medicine and gave it to us with limitless kindness. A person makes a huge leap towards spiritual health due to confidence.**

Plant the seed of confidence within yourself. We can only walk along this path if we acquire confidence.

May the Triple Gem Bless You!!!